

Romans 3:14

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness:

Analysis

Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness. From Psalm 10:7, Paul continues the indictment of speech. Hōn to stoma aras kai pikrias gemei (ὧν τὸ στόμα ἀρᾶς καὶ πικρίας γέμει, "whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness"). Ara (ἀρά) is cursing—invoking harm on others. Pikria (πικρία) is bitterness—the rancid, poisonous disposition that underlies cursing.

The verb gemei (γέμει, "is full") depicts the mouth as a vessel overflowing with venom. Jesus taught that the mouth speaks from the abundance of the heart (Matthew 12:34). Paul's point: human speech reveals the corruption within. Where God's image-bearers should speak blessing, truth, and wisdom, we spew cursing, deception, and bitterness. This is total depravity—not that humans are as evil as they could be, but that sin has corrupted every faculty.

Historical Context

In Jewish thought, the power of the spoken word was enormous (see James 3:1-12). Words could bless or curse, create or destroy. Paul's indictment strikes at the heart of human pretension: even our most distinctive faculty—speech—is corrupted by sin.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. What "cursing and bitterness" characterize your speech patterns—complaint, cynicism, criticism?
2. How can you cultivate speech that gives grace to hearers (Ephesians 4:29) rather than spreads poison?
3. Why is taming the tongue impossible apart from heart transformation by the Spirit?

Interlinear Text

ὧν	τὸ	στόμα	ἀρᾶς	καὶ	πικρίας	γέμει
Whose	G3588	mouth	of cursing	and	bitterness	is full
G3739		G4750	G685	G2532	G4088	G1073

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 10:7 (Sin): His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and fraud: under his tongue is mischief and vanity.

Psalms 59:12 (Sin): For the sin of their mouth and the words of their lips let them even be taken in their pride: and for cursing and lying which they speak.